

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (D-IL), issued the following statement following House passage of the Financial Services-General Government Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2008.

Jackson said, "In passing this funding bill, the Democratic-led Congress advances important priorities to spur job creation and make the economy work for everyone. This bill restores the President's cuts in small business loans, rejecting his proposal to slash efforts to make capital and financial services available to undeserved communities."

Specifically, the bill provides \$21.4 billion in discretionary spending for programs to make our tax system fairer; strengthen our economy; provide greater access to capital; and bolster oversight and consumer protection. It also implements important election reform, providing \$300 million in grants to help states upgrade voting machines and voter registration databases.

Jackson added, "I am also very pleased that the bill provides \$231,000 for the Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission (ALNAC) to partner with local universities and/or small business development centers to conduct a comprehensive study on how the region can maximize job creation and retention, and ensure local and minority participation during all phases of the forthcoming airport project. While others pout, shout and stomp on the sidelines, ALNAC continues to press forward with the only viable, comprehensive and financed plan to build the Abraham Lincoln National Airport.

"With this federal funding, ALNAC will continue to lay the groundwork in the Southland for a smooth landing of the airport. After more than two decades of discussion and debate, the third airport is getting closer and our communities must prepare to take full advantage of this new economic engine. Despite the perpetual diversions and duplicity of opponents, ALNAC is taking concrete action on its innovative public-private partnership to expand Chicago's aviation market and bring thousands of jobs and billions of dollars to the state," Jackson concluded.

ALNAC is a duly-constituted, open and inclusive public commission comprised of 21 home-rule municipalities in Cook, Will and Kankakee counties. ALNAC's private partners, LCOR and SNC-Lavalin, who have developed airports throughout the world, would use private funds to fund the airport's construction.